

stances differed from those of other nations whose simplicity arose from the deficient fancy of untutored judgment: the refined study displayed in every stage of all their works shows this. What simplicity is to be remarked in the antiquities of Egypt and India, Assyria, and Persia, so far as we know them, Mexico, and early mediæval Europe, is the crudeness of uncultivated fancy, and is frequently conjoined with dreadfully abortive efforts at more complicated design in enrichment and variety; but the simplicity of the Greeks extends into their most elaborate design, and no less their elaboration of thought (so I contend) into their most simple conceptions. The flank of seventeen columns and the front of eight in the Parthenon,—the long range of twenty-four precisely similar and simple shafts, with the unbroken line of the long simple entablature, convey to my mind an effect of elaborate simplicity, which, if still questioned, may be seen carried out no less in the integer of the column, or of the stylobate, or of the entablature, than in the integer of the whole temple. Mighty wealth and power, despising show, stand up in the far greater majesty of studied and severe unostentatiousness. No workmanship can be finer than their masonry, no finish more exquisite than their sculpture,—it was not poverty that restrained enrichment by cost; but their manly mind preferred for its own sake the manly grandeur of severe simplicity, and took delight—the delight of pure taste and cultivated intellect—in the native nobleness of it.

The Greek temple, then, is no more than the simple idea of an oblong edifice of well-elevated walls, covered by a roof sloping to each flank from a longitudinal ridge in the middle, the ends taking the undisguised form of the transverse section. Does not the boast of Inigo Jones, that his St. Paul's, Covent Garden, if it must be a "barn," should be "the handsomest barn in England," show in a singular light beside the simple plan of the great "barn" on the Athenian rock—the wonder of the world? But what we have now particularly to observe in this composition is the remarkable feature formed by the pediment. The formation of the pediment is by the horizontal cornice of the flanks being continued along the end, and at the same time carried raking from each side to the slope of the roof.* The triangular tympanum is then set back to the line of the entablature; and the raking cornices are crowned with an additional moulding, as a stop to the roof covering, in the first place, and in the second as a means of finish to the feature thus formed—the pediment. The prevailing characteristic of simplicity is here again the governing principle; but it is a question whether the pediment is a perfect composition, or indeed whether it can possibly be made so. There is an awkwardness in the connection of the raking cornice with the horizontal. In the pure Greek works there is not here so decided a defect as in the Roman and Italian,—from the circumstance, that in the former the corona being so broad and projecting, and the surmounting moulding so very small, the cornice is in principle almost what may be called a single bold fillet (fig. 1), a very different principle from that of late imitations; but still the presence of a surmounting moulding, however small, occasions what is at once observable as a decided awkwardness in the junction. This, however, has only to be referred to the extreme difficulty of composition in this part of the design. As a first principle, the sloping roof is what we need not pause to enlarge upon, it being simply the best possible conception for its purpose; and when the Greeks preferred the finish of this by what we may call a gable to the easier finish by the now common hip roof, I certainly think they decided judiciously, even when in so deciding they adopted all the disadvantage of the difficulty under consideration. The finished

outline which is obtained for the end façade is so universally acknowledged as to be worthy of all the risk, if not even absolutely demanded, in order to complete the design upon the principle adopted in the whole composition. But it is well worthy of study to try whether any improvement could be made upon the Greek pediment. The difficulty lies in combining the straight horizontal entablature of the flank with the gable of the end. Several modes of attempting this might be conjectured; the two simplest of which would be,—first, continuing the cornice on the slope alone, and secondly, continuing the cornice horizontally alone. (Figs. 2 and 3). In the former instance, it is manifest that the triglyphed frieze could not be carried along the end; besides that the expansion of the width of the frieze in the gable, if the triglyph enrichment were even dispensed with, it would be scarcely possible to form in accordance with the general style of composition. In the latter, the naked gable above the horizontal cornice claims at once some covering; and if we supply this by such means as a raking crown moulding, it would be meagre, unless, perhaps, at least as heavy as the cornice itself, and even then would finish by no means well at the sides. Between these two arrangements the Greek idea of the pediment forms a good compromise, combining the advantages of both; but therewith involving of necessity (as I have called it) an awkwardness in the junction of two dissimilar principles. Still, there are other ideas which might yet be attempted, such as fig. 4, forming the cornice, with an under corona or fascia in the bed mould, so that it shall be separable in the pediment,—the corona and crown moulding forming the raking cornice, and the bed mould, with its fascia, a lighter base for the pediment. This, I am inclined to think, might be carried out into an improvement,—but I would, rather than affirm too decidedly, take this as my view of the question,—that the difficulties of the pediment are very great indeed, although, at the same time, I must confess a very considerable reluctance to admit the perfectness of the Greek idea.

One of the best points in the composition of the Greek temple, although the most unassuming of all, is the stylobate. The prevailing simplicity is here present in perfection, with a broad-based decision of design which cannot be too much admired. Artists less severely truthful in their judgment would scarcely have adhered as these did to the unvarying three steps (and these not determined at all, be it observed, by convenient rise and tread as steps to the colonnade, but by the fit proportions of such a base to the building): many more pretending efforts have been made to produce a stylobate—but these three simple steps are the best, because the most excellently principled of all. They give a broad, strong, severe foundation to the composition, which modern architects, if we may judge of their own practice, have failed to appreciate. The principle which we may deduce from the Greek practice, that the mass of the base should more than counterbalance the overhanging mass of the cornice (to which its purpose is to provide what may be called a balance in the composition), and which may be taken as invariably a good principle, is much less frequently to be met with in modern works than a meagre reverse—there being generally, indeed, no base at all. In the mediæval works also, although the overhanging cornice is discarded, the spreading base ought not to have been so much discarded with it, as we may judge from the bold and finished effect of those works where the base is heavier than usual.

The severity of design, to which I give every value in the architecture of the Greeks, is nevertheless, I think, carried too far in the Doric column, in respect of the absence of base. Just as we provide a stylobate as a balance to the cornice, so I hold it invariably requisite to provide a base for the column as a balance to the capital. The baseless Doric seems crude and unfinished. The flutings terminating upon the pavement form in the abruptness of the thing a positive eyefore. If, instead of a column of studied outline,—rounded, diminished, fluted, with necking, echinus, and abacus elaborately proportioned, it were a mere upright squared shaft, the baselessness would, in these circumstances, and

these alone, be correct and satisfying as a balance for the absence of capital; but if even a tile be placed above, I hold there must be a tile placed below,—and with the finished form of the Doric column I cannot conceive how the ancients could make it baseless, and still more so when, in the very preceding idea of the work itself, the noble stylobate carries out the good principle so well.

ROBERT KERR.

LEICESTER SQUARE.

THE decision of the Lord Chancellor being adverse to the right of any private party building over the centre part of Leicester-square, and it having thus secured to the public at large one of those spaces in the metropolis which assist most materially to the well-being of its inhabitants, by a free ventilation and uninterrupted space of light and air, it becomes a question, in which not only the inhabitants of the square but the great body of metropolitan pedestrians are interested, how such an open and neglected space could be most beneficially converted into a public use.

Green trees and shrubs and flowers are most pleasant to look upon, especially by those whose avocations confine them to the brick encumbered thoroughfares of London. But it is hopeless to expect that such green things will flourish in our sooty atmosphere. It is in evidence that no person ever walks in the enclosure; the railings are dilapidated; the walks are mud; and the trees that should be green are black. The square is in the middle of a great thoroughfare, where business and traffic are the important objects of life, and where nursery-maids and children idling or taking exercise, as they do in some of the more aristocratic squares, would seem quite out of character.

I would suggest that the whole enclosure should be cleared away, and the area flagged and paved. It might be protected with a stone curb, granite piers, and chains. The statue in the centre would give it character, and we should obtain an open handsome space, of which we have few examples in London, but which would recall to the foreigners, who here love to congregate, many of the piazzas or places which form conspicuous features in their own continental cities.

In a mere utilitarian point of view, this arrangement would be beneficial. It so happens that much of the pedestrian traffic through this square is upon the diagonal lines. It forms the direct communication from Regent-street to the Strand, and from Long-acre to Pall Mall, on these diagonal lines, and the open space would so far facilitate the communications.

How this unprofitable speculation can be effected I need not anticipate; but as it is evident that a private building speculation is smashed, the opportunity might be turned to public advantage by those interested in the improvement of the architectural appearance of the metropolis.*

T. L.

LEASEHOLD TENURES AND FRAIL STRUCTURES.

THE present metropolitan custom of letting out lands on short building leases is, as it has been, the cause of the wretched character of the edifices which form our streets, terraces, avenues, and even suburban villas.

It is not unusual for speculators (and all men who add a row in continuation to the rapidly running "Suburbs," are speculators) to take blocks on terminable leases for 90, 80, 70, 60, 50, and even for periods so short as 20 years. In doing so they naturally look to a profit from the new erections to be founded thereon, and, of course, they must so manage the capital disbursed, as to make it return principal, interest, and profit: in order to do this, the cheapest possible mode of construction must be adopted, the worst and least costly materials selected, and the greatest celerity in the operation must be compassed. The inducement held out to the builder is an immunity from rent for the two first years, or, as it is termed, two years are free, at a peppercorn: perhaps before the lapse of one year the ground

* A similar suggestion made by me some time ago was re-echoed by many of our contemporaries with favour.—ED.

* It is to be remarked that the crown moulding (Fig. 1) is a slope short on the side, as a mere raking coping-stone, but the fillet B is carried along the flank as a member of the horizontal cornice,—thus manifesting a desire to constitute some sort of separation or division of the flank or primary cornice in the two cornices of the pediment,—as if the raking cornice should take the crown mouldings and corona, and the horizontal the corona and bed mouldings. Besides this, the circumstance of the bird's mouth moulding C, of the horizontal cornice becoming a smaller one in the raking cornice, is to be observed as additionally significant of the disposition,—making the principle of separation still more apparent.